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SELF ERECTING POT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending U.S. Serial No. 10/263,059, filed on October 1, 2002, entitled "DECORATIVE ELEMENTS PROVIDED WITH A CIRCULAR OR CRIMPED CONFIGURATION AT POINT OF SALE OR POINT OF USE".

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to pots, and more particularly but not by way of limitation, to a self erecting pot for use as a flower pot for a floral grouping. In particular, the self erecting pot of the present invention includes at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material having an inner area, a plurality of panels extending from the inner area and a score line between the inner area and the plurality of panels. The self erecting pot also includes at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material bonded to the non-heat shrinkable

sheet of material in such a manner that the heat shrinkable material when heated pulls the plurality of panels of the non-heat shrinkable sheet of material together and thereby forms the heat shrinkable material and the non-heat shrinkable sheet of material into the self erecting pot.

2. Brief Description of the Related Art

[0004] Flower pot covers are generally known in the art, however, disadvantages of the related art are difficulty in storage, shipping and assembly. The present invention allows for a decorative pot cover which can be stored and shipped in a substantially flattened condition, hence saving shipping and storage costs, and erected at another location by the simple application of heat. The novelty of erecting a pot cover by the application of heat may also appeal to the consumer thereby improving the marketability of the pot cover.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] FIG. 1 is a top perspective view of a self erecting pot, constructed in accordance with the present invention, the self erecting pot having a floral grouping disposed therein.

[0006] FIG. 2 is a top plan view of a non-heat shrinkable sheet of material used to construct the self erecting pot of FIG. 1, the non-heat shrinkable sheet of material shown with a bonding material disposed thereon and with one corner upturned.

[0007] FIG. 3 is a top plan view of a heat shrinkable sheet of material used to construct the self erecting pot of FIG. 1, with one corner upturned.

[0008] FIG. 4 is a top plan view of the non-heat shrinkable sheet of material of FIG. 2 bonded to a plurality of heat shrinkable sheets of material (with one sheet of the plurality of heat shrinkable sheets being shown) of FIG. 3.

[0009] FIG. 5 is a top perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the self erecting pot of the present invention, the self erecting pot having a floral grouping disposed therein.

[0010] FIG. 6 is a top plan view of a non-heat shrinkable sheet of material used to construct the self erecting pot of FIG. 5, the non-heat shrinkable sheet of material shown with a bonding material disposed thereon and with one corner upturned.

[0011] FIG. 7 is a top plan view of one of a plurality of heat shrinkable sheets of material used to construct the self erecting pot of FIG. 5, the heat shrinkable sheet of material shown with a bonding material thereon and one corner upturned.

[0012] FIG. 8 is a top plan view of one of a plurality of elongated segments of heat shrinkable material used to construct the self erecting pot of FIG. 5, the elongated segment of heat shrinkable material shown with a bonding material thereon and one corner upturned.

[0013] FIG. 9 is a top plan view of the non-heat shrinkable sheet of material of FIG. 6 with the heat shrinkable sheet of material of FIG. 7 and the elongated segment of heat shrinkable material of FIG. 8 bonded to the first sheet of material.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] It is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description (e.g., text, examples, data, and/or tables) or illustrated or shown in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments or of being practiced or carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein is for purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting, and

one of ordinary skill in the art, given the present specification, would be capable of making and using the presently claimed and disclosed invention in a broad and non-limiting manner.

[0015] Referring now to FIG. 1 shown therein is a self erecting pot 10 having a floral grouping 12 disposed therein. The self erecting pot 10 has an erect condition as shown in FIG. 1 and a substantially flattened condition as shown in FIG. 4. The self erecting pot 10 is constructed from at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14, at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16, and a bonding material 18.

[0016] In the erect condition (shown in FIG. 1), the self erecting pot 10 is provided with an open upper end 20, a substantially closed lower end 22, a sidewall 24, and an outer peripheral surface 26. The substantially closed lower end 22 and the sidewall 24 of the self erecting pot 10 cooperate to define a retaining space 28 which is in open communication with the open upper end 20 of the self erecting pot 10. The self erecting pot 10 is adapted to receive at least a portion of the floral grouping 12, or a botanical item, or a propagule, or a floral holding material or combinations thereof in the retaining space 28. The floral grouping 12 or the botanical item or the propagule or the floral holding material may be disposed within the retaining space 28 of the self erecting pot 10 along with a growing medium 30 described in further detail below. The term "floral holding material," as used herein may include a floral foam or other

substance or structure including hollow polymeric structures suitable for supporting at least a portion of the floral grouping or botanical item.

[0017] The term "floral grouping" as used herein means cut fresh flowers, artificial flowers, a single flower, other fresh and/or artificial plants, or other floral materials and may include other secondary plants and/or ornamentation or artificial or natural materials which add to the aesthetics of the overall floral grouping. The term "floral grouping" also includes a growing potted plant having a root portion. It will be appreciated that the floral grouping may consist of only a single bloom, only foliage, a botanical item, or a propagule.

[0018] The term "growing medium" when used herein means any liquid, solid, or gaseous material used for plant growth or for the cultivation of propagules, including organic and inorganic materials such as soil, humus, perlite, vermiculite, sand, water, and including the nutrients, fertilizers, hormones, or combinations thereof required by the plants or propagules for growth.

[0019] The term "botanical item" when used herein means a natural or artificial herbaceous or woody plant, taken singly or in combination. The term "botanical item" also means any portion or portions of natural or artificial herbaceous or woody plants including stems, leaves, flowers, blossoms, buds, blooms, cones, or roots, taken singly or in combination, or in groupings of such portions such as bouquet or floral grouping .

[0020] The term "propagule" when used herein means any structure capable of being propagated or acting as an agent of reproduction including seeds, shoots, stems, runners, tubers, plants, leaves, roots, or spores.

[0021] Referring now to FIG. 2, the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 has an upper surface 32, a lower surface 34, an inner area 35, a plurality of panels 36 extending from the inner area 35, the plurality of panels 36 shown and described as a first panel 38, a second panel 40, a third panel 42, a fourth panel 43, and a plurality of gaps 44 disposed between the plurality of panels 36, and a score line 45 between the inner area 35, and the plurality of panels 36. The bonding material 18 disposed on the plurality of panels 36 as shown in FIG. 2.

[0022] The inner area 35 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 is circular, although the inner area 35 can be, by way of example but not limitation rectangular, square, oval, triangular, or even arbitrarily or fanciful depending upon the shape of the pot desired. The first, second, third, and fourth panels 38, 40, 42, and 44, respectively, each have a first side 50, a second side 52, and an inner border 54, an outer border 56, and an outer periphery 58. The outer periphery 58 of the first, second, third, and fourth panels 38, 40, 42, and 44, respectively, includes the first side 50, the second side 52, the inner border 54, and the outer border 56. The plurality of gaps 44 are shown and described as a first gap 60 provided between the second side 52

of the first panel 38 and the first side 50 of the second panel 40, a second gap 62 provided between the second side 52 of the second panel 40 and the first side 50 of the third panel 42, a third gap 64 provided between the second side 52 of the third panel 42 and the first side 50 of the fourth panel 43, and a fourth gap 66 provided between the second side 52 of the fourth panel 43 and the first side 50 of the first panel 38.

[0023] The score line 45 is defined by the inner border 54 of the first, second, third, and fourth panels 38, 40, 42, and 43, respectively. The score line 45 provides a weakened area that allows the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 to bend or fold along the score line 45 as the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 is partially formed into the shape of a pot. The score line could be, for example, an area of perforations or indentations in the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14, a hinged area or even a combination of perforations, indentations, and hinged areas. The first, second, third, and fourth gaps 60, 62, 64, and 66, respectively, are provided so that excess material from the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 does not hinder the contraction of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 as the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 is partially formed into a frusto-conical configuration and the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 shrinks

and pulls the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 and the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 into the self erecting pot 10.

[0024] Examples of materials from which the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may be constructed include paper, treated paper, polymeric film, metalized film, foil, cardboard, metal, and laminations and combinations thereof. The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may be constructed of a plurality of layers of the same or different types of materials. The layers of material forming the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may be connected together, laminated, or may be separate layers. The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may be composed entirely of the same material, or portions of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may be of different types of material.

[0025] The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may vary in color and may include a design and/or decorative pattern 70 (shown by way of example but not by way of limitation in FIG. 2 as a sun with a cloud) which can be printed, etched, and/or embossed on the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 using inks or other printing materials. An example of an ink which may be applied to the upper surface 32, lower surface 34, or both the upper and lower surfaces 32 and 34, respectively, of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 is described in U.S. Patent No. 5,207,706 entitled "Water Based Ink On Foil And/Or Synthetic Organic

Polymer," issued to Kingman on Sep. 15, 1992, which is hereby expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0026] The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may have various colorings, coatings, flocking, and/or metallic finishes, or other decorative surface ornamentation applied separately or simultaneously or may be characterized totally or partially by pearlescent, translucent, transparent, iridescent, neon, or the like, qualities. Each of the above-named characteristics may occur alone or in combination and may be applied to the upper and/or lower surface of the material forming the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14. Moreover, portions of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may vary in the combination of such characteristics. The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 may be opaque, translucent, transparent, or partially clear or tinted transparent.

[0027] The term "heat shrinkable" material as used herein means any material which, upon application of a required amount of heat, is reduced in size, i.e., shrunk, so as to conform to an object about which the material is wrapped. Generally such materials are polymeric materials produced by stretching a polymeric film under elevated temperatures and then quenching the stretched polymeric film. Thus, when an elevated temperature above a certain threshold is again applied to the polymeric film, the polymeric film will shrink along the direction that it had been previously stretched.

[0028] Heat shrinkable polymeric materials which can be employed in the formation of the self erecting pots 10 described hereinafter can be produced from a number of commercially available polymeric resins, such as polyvinyl chloride, polypropylene, polyethylene, and the like. The thickness of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 utilized herein can vary widely as long as the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 functions in accordance with the present invention as described herein. Generally, however, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 will have a thickness in a range of from about 0.1 mil to about 30 mil.

[0029] The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may be constructed of a plurality of layers of the same or different types of heat shrinkable materials. The layers of heat shrinkable material comprising the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may be connected together or laminated or may be separate layers. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may be composed entirely of heat shrinkable material, or portions of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may be a non-heat shrinkable material.

[0030] In addition, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may have various colorings, coatings, flocking, and/or metallic finishes, or other decorative surface ornamentation applied separately or simultaneously or may be characterized totally or partially by pearlescent, translucent, transparent,

iridescent, neon, or the like, qualities. Each of the above-named characteristics may occur alone or in combination and may be applied to the upper and/or lower surface of the material comprising the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16. Moreover, portions of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may vary in the combination of such characteristics. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may be opaque, translucent, transparent, or partially clear or tinted transparent. Heating of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 can be accomplished manually, as with a hand-held heat gun, or with a automated heating process.

[0031] Preferably, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 is flexible, however, it should be understood that the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 may be constructed from any material as long as the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 function in accordance with the present invention as described herein.

[0032] The bonding material 18 bonds the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14. The bonding material 18 is typically disposed near the first sides 50 and the second sides 52 of the first, second, third, and fourth panels 38, 40, 42, and 44 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14.

[0033] The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 is sized, shaped, and bonded to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of

material 14 via the bonding material 18 such that the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 does not detach from the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 upon the heating and shrinking of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16. The bonding material 18 is also applied to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 and/or the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 such that the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 is not hindered from shrinking and pulling the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 into the form of the self erecting pot 10. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 can be bonded to either the upper surface 32 or lower surface 34 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 or the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 can be bonded to both the upper surface 32 and the lower surface 34 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14.

[0034] The term "bonding material" as used herein is understood to include any material capable of connecting the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 to the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 such as an adhesive, preferably a pressure sensitive adhesive, or a cohesive. Where the bonding material 18 is a cohesive, a similar cohesive material must be placed on the adjacent surface of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 for bondingly contacting and bondingly engaging with the cohesive material. The term "bonding material" as used herein means any type of

material which can be used to effect the bonding or connecting of two adjacent portions of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 and at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 to effect the connection or bonding described herein. The term "bonding material" also includes labels, bands, ribbons, strings, tape, staples, or combinations thereof.

[0035] The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 are sized, shaped, disposed, and bonded to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 and the score line 36 in the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 is disposed, such that, upon the heating and shrinking of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 flexes or bends along the score line 36 and the first, second, third, and fourth panels 38, 40, 42, and 44 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 are pulled upwardly. The first, second, third, and fourth gaps 60, 62, 64, and 66 are also closed or are at least substantially reduced in size as the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 shrinks. After the heating and contraction of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16, the inner area 35 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 and the first, second, third, and fourth panels 38, 40, 42, and 44 form the self erecting pot 10.

[0036] Referring now to FIG. 3, shown therein is the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of

material 16 has an upper surface 72, a lower surface 74, and outer periphery 76. The outer periphery 76 of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 is shown and described as substantially trapezoidal, however, those skilled in the art will readily recognize and appreciate the outer periphery of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 could be square, rectangular, triangular, hexagonal, octagonal, circular, oblong, elongated, fanciful, or combinations and derivations of the aforementioned shapes.

[0037] Referring now FIG. 4 shown therein is the self erecting pot 10 in the substantially flattened condition. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 is bonded to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 via the bonding material 18. The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 and the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 are sized, shaped, disposed, and bonded such that upon partially forming the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 and the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 into a frusto-conical configuration and applying heat to the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 contracts and causes the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 to flex, fold, or bend along the score line 36 and pull the first, second, third, and fourth panels 38, 40, 42, and 44 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 into the self erecting pot 10 shown in FIG. 1. Typically, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material

16 is disposed and bonded to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14 so as to entirely cover the first, second, third, and fourth gaps 60, 62, 64, and 66 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 can be bonded to the upper surface 32 of lower surface 34 or both the upper and lower surfaces 32 and 34 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14. The advantage of entirely covering the first, second, third, and fourth gaps 60, 62, 64, and 66 with the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 is that in this configuration the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 essentially seals the self erecting pot 10 so that growing medium 30, floral holding material or liquid does not leak through the self erecting pot 10.

[0038] Referring now to FIG. 5, shown therein is a self erecting pot 110 having a floral grouping 112 disposed therein. The self erecting pot 110 is similar to the self erecting pot 10 and the floral grouping 112 is similar to the floral grouping 12. The self erecting pot 110 has an erect condition as shown in FIG. 5 and a substantially flattened condition as shown in FIG. 9. The self erecting pot 110 is constructed from at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 similar to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14, at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 similar to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14, at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 117, and a bonding material 118.

[0039] In the erect condition, the self erecting pot 110 is provided with an open upper end 120, a substantially closed lower end 122, a sidewall 124, and an outer peripheral surface 126. The substantially closed lower end 122 and the sidewall 124 of the self erecting pot 110 cooperate to define a retaining space 128 which is in open communication with the open upper end 120 of the self erecting pot 110. The self erecting pot 110 is adapted to contain or cover at least a portion of the floral grouping 112 or a botanical item or a propagule or a floral holding material in the retaining space 128 of the self erecting pot 110. Furthermore, the botanical item or the propagule or the floral holding material may be disposed within the retaining space 128 of the self erecting pot 110 along with a suitable growing medium 130.

[0040] Referring now to FIG. 6, the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 has an upper surface 132, a lower surface 134, an inner area 135, and a score line 136, a plurality of panels 137 shown and described as a first panel 138, a second panel 140, a third panel 142, and a fourth panel 144 extends from the inner area 135 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114. The score line 136 is disposed between the inner area 135 and the first, second, third, and fourth panels 138, 140, 142, and 144. The first, second, third, and fourth panels 138, 140, 142, and 144 each have a left side 150, distal side 152, right side 154, and proximal side 156. The bonding

material 118 is typically disposed near the left side 150 and the right side 154 of the first, second, third, and fourth panels 138, 140, 142, and 144.

[0041] The inner area 135 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 is square in configuration. A plurality of gaps 159 are provided between the plurality of panels 137. The plurality of gaps 159 are shown and described as a first gap 160 provided between the right side 154 of the first panel 138 and the left side 150 of the second panel 140. A second gap 162 is provided between the right side 154 of the second panel 140 and the left side 150 of the third panel 142. A third gap 164 is provided between the right side 154 of the third panel 142 and the left side 150 of the fourth panel 144. A fourth gap 166 is provided between the right side 154 of the fourth panel 144 and the left side 150 of the first panel 138.

[0042] The score line 136 is similar to the score line 36 and provides a weakened area that allows the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 to bend or fold along the score line 136 as a force is applied to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114. The plurality of gaps 159 are provided so that excess material from the at least one first sheet of material 114 does not hinder the contraction of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 as the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 is formed into a cubical configuration.

[0043] The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 is constructed from substantially similar type of material as the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14. The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 may also vary in color and may include a design or decorative pattern or can be printed, etched or embossed using inks or other printing materials similar to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14. The at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 may also have various colorings, coatings, flockings, or metal metallic finishes or other decorative surface ornamentation applied separately or simultaneously or may be characterized totally or partially by pearlescent, translucent, transparent, iridescent, neon, or other like qualities. Each of the above-named characteristics may occur alone or in combination and may be applied to the upper surface or lower surface of the material forming the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114.

[0044] Referring now to FIG. 7, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 are similar to the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 except each of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 are generally triangular in configuration. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 has an upper surface 172, a lower surface 174, and an outer periphery 176. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 is bonded to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 in a

substantially similar manner as the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16 is bonded to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 14. The bonding material 118 is also substantially similar to the bonding material 18.

[0045] Referring now to FIG. 8, shown therein is the at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 117. The at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 117 is made out of substantially similar material as the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 16. The at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 117 has a first end 180, a second end 182, a length 184, and a bonding material 186 typically disposed near the first end 180 and the second end 182.

[0046] Referring now to FIG. 9, shown therein is the self erecting pot 110 in the substantially flattened condition. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 and the at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 117 are bonded to the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114. The at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 is sized, shaped, and disposed such that the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 cover the first, second, third, and fourth gaps 160, 162, 164, and 166. The bonding material 186 near the outer periphery 176 of the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 bonds the first, second, third, and fourth

panels 138, 140, 142, and 144 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 to the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116.

[0047] The first end 180 of a first at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 187 is bonded to the first panel 138. The second end 182 of the first at least one elongated segment 187 is bonded to the third panel 142. A first end 180 of a second at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 188 is bonded to the second panel 140. A second end 182 of the second at least one elongated segment of heat shrinkable material 188 is bonded to the fourth panel 144 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114.

[0048] In operation, the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116, and the first and second at least one elongated segments of heat shrinkable material 187 and 188 are bonded such that upon partially forming the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 and the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 into a cubical configuration and applying heat to the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 and the first and second at least one elongated segments of heat shrinkable material 187 and 188, the at least one heat shrinkable sheet of material 116 and the first and second at least one elongated segments of heat shrinkable material 187 and 188 contract causing the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 to flex, fold, or bend

along the score line 136 and pull the first, second, third, and fourth panels 138, 140, 142, and 144 of the at least one non-heat shrinkable sheet of material 114 into the form of the self erecting pot 110 shown in FIG. 5.

[0049] It should be noted that although the self erecting pot 10 is shown and described as having four panels and a substantially frusto-conical configuration and the self erecting pot 110 is shown and described as having four panels and a cubical configuration in the erect condition, those skilled in the art will readily recognize and appreciate that the self erecting pots 10 and 110 can have any number of panels and be sized, shaped, and disposed so as to provide the self erecting pot with an octagonal configuration, parabolic configuration, cylindrical configuration, triangular configuration, rectangular configuration, or even a fanciful configuration or any combination or derivation of the above mentioned configurations.

[0050] Changes may be made in the construction and the operation of the various components, elements, and assemblies described herein and changes may be made in the steps or the sequence of steps of the methods described herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.